

Unconventional Warfare and Operational Art:

Can We Achieve Continuity in Command and Control?

**A Monograph
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14. ABSTRACT This monograph focuses on the gap in operational command and control for unconventional warfare operations (UW), and the organizational elements required to mitigate this gap. In the 20th Century and beyond, the United States conducted UW in the Second World War, Korea, Vietnam, and the War on Terror. After each war, the United States' command and control structure for planning, organizing, and leading UW was dismantled, and valuable experience and continuity were lost. Subsequently, at the outset of each conflict, Special Operations Forces have been forced to build an operational command and control mechanism tailored to the requirements of each UW situation. A joint command and control organizational model for unconventional warfare at the operational level will provide an appropriate means to bridge this gap. This monograph concludes that in order to plan, organize, and lead UW operations, the U.S. must establish a focal point within the geographical combatant commands that would leverage all joint and interagency capabilities and resources required to plan, organize, and lead UW operations. Creating regional JIATF-UWs will leverage the capabilities of the nation's military manpower and resources to wage successful UW, and offers a solution to the continuity gap in SOF's ability to command and control joint unconventional warfare at the operational level of war.						
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ABSTRACT

“Unconventional Warfare and Operational Art: Can We Achieve Continuity in Command and Control?”
by Major John W. Silkman, Special Forces, 52 pages.

This monograph will focus on the gap in operational command and control for unconventional warfare operations, and the organizational elements required to mitigate this gap.

The United States has conducted unconventional warfare many times in our history – from the Revolutionary War to the present. In the 20th Century and beyond, the United States conducted unconventional warfare in the Second World War, Korea, Vietnam, and the War on Terror. After each war, the United States’ command and control structure for planning, organizing, and leading unconventional warfare was dismantled, and valuable experience and continuity were lost. Subsequently, at the outset of each conflict, Special Operations Forces have been forced to build an operational command and control mechanism tailored to the requirements of each UW situation. We continue to waste crucial time and resources relearning the lessons of our unconventional warfare past.

With expanding roles and responsibilities for Special Operations Forces in the War on Terror, unconventional warfare is fast becoming a dominant form of warfare. To design and execute an effective unconventional warfare campaign, Special Operations Forces need coherent and flexible organizations to integrate the different joint special operations and conventional forces with other government agencies, in a coordinated effort against terrorism. A joint command and control organizational model for unconventional warfare at the operational level will provide an appropriate means to bridge this gap.

This monograph concludes that in order to plan, organize, and lead UW operations, the U.S. must establish a focal point within the geographical combatant commands that would leverage all joint and interagency capabilities and resources required to plan, organize, and lead UW operations. Each of the geographic theaters would have a JIATF-UW to command and control all unconventional warfare actions.

Creating regional JIATF-UWs will leverage the capabilities of the nation’s military manpower and resources to wage successful unconventional warfare, and offers a solution to the continuity gap in SOF’s ability to command and control joint unconventional warfare at the operational level of war.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“Black cat, white cat. It doesn’t matter. All that matters is that it catches mice.”

Deng Xiaoping

Often perceived as a black mark in the history of warfare, the art of unconventional warfare¹ has been traditionally shunned by the United States in favor of the direct, conventional approach. The consequence of this perception is that the Department of Defense tends to lock their unconventional warfare “tools” in a box until desperately needed. When deemed necessary to pull the unconventional warfare tools out of the box, the process of using them has been disjointed, haphazard, and inefficient.

The United States has conducted unconventional warfare many times in our country’s history – from the Revolutionary War to the present. In the 20th Century and beyond, the United States has conducted unconventional warfare in the Second World War, Korea, Vietnam, and the War on Terror. After each war, the United States’ command and control structure for planning, organizing, and leading unconventional warfare (UW) was dismantled, and in each instance, valuable experience and continuity were lost. At the outset of each subsequent conflict, Special Operations Forces (SOF)² were forced to build an operational command and control mechanism tailored to the requirements of each unconventional warfare situation. This time period from

¹ Unconventional Warfare: A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted by indigenous or surrogate forces that are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes guerrilla warfare and other direct offensive low-visibility, covert, or clandestine operations, as well as the indirect activities of subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and evasion and escape (E&E). Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-05. *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*. December 2003, II-6 -7.

² Special Operations Forces: Those active and reserve component forces of the Military Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-05. *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*. December 2003, GL-10.

when the UW structure from one conflict is dismantled until a UW structure appropriate to the next conflict is created is the continuity gap this paper will address. History has shown that the U.S. wastes crucial time and resources relearning the lessons of our unconventional warfare past each time we go to war.

As we prosecute the War on Terror, we find more and more of our military resources being spread across diverse and distant global regions. Nationally, Americans need an economy of force measure to leverage the demands on our force structure. Unconventional warfare operations traditionally accomplish missions vital to our national interest while using less resources and less manpower than conventional military operations.

With expanding roles and responsibilities for Special Operations Forces in the War on Terror, unconventional warfare is fast becoming a dominant form of warfare. To design and execute an effective unconventional warfare campaign, Special Operations Forces need coherent and flexible organizations that incorporate the different joint special operations and conventional forces with other government agencies, in a coordinated effort against terrorism. A solution to bridging this gap is a joint command and control organizational model for unconventional warfare at the operational level of war.

This monograph will identify and address the continuity gap in unconventional warfare planning, organization, and leadership. First, it will explore the feasibility of conducting joint, interagency unconventional warfare at the operational level of war. Second, it will provide a process to bridge the conventional – unconventional warfare continuity gap, by introducing a joint unconventional warfare command and control planning model.

Research Question and Methodology

The purpose of this monograph is to answer the question: *How can the U.S. solve the continuity gap in SOF's ability to command and control joint unconventional warfare at the operational level of war?* An examination of American history will show how unconventional

warfare has been a relevant tool in the conduct of operational warfighting. An examination of joint and Army doctrine will show the legitimacy and relevancy of unconventional warfare in achieving the nation's goals. The Seven Learning Disabilities from Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* offer criteria to answer the research question.³

This monograph will address U.S. military and social history and the ability of the United States to conduct UW. It will also examine how the nation achieved victory and independence using unconventional tactics. The paper will examine how, as the U.S. developed economically and militarily, attention was given to unconventional warfare as a means to achieve military objectives in concert with U.S. national interests.

Finally, this study will take the facts and assumptions derived from history, doctrine, and the future development of the operational art, and analyze them using the criteria gleaned from Peter Senge's discussion of "learning organizations" in his book *The Fifth Discipline*. Senge states that a learning organization is most likely to succeed by overcoming the Seven Learning Disabilities. The book describes seven deficiencies that might identify whether or not an organization is a learning organization; more specifically, an organization that develops a capacity to survive by using *adaptive* learning or a capacity to create by using *generative* learning. The criteria for this study will be three of Senge's seven deficiencies of the learning organization; "The Fixation of Events," "The Delusion of Learning from Experience," and "The Myth of the Management Team."

"The Fixation on Events." Crisis events can be explained by immediate events that led to the crisis at hand. Senge suggests that seeking out such explanations may distract an organization from seeing the longer-term patterns of change that lie behind the events.⁴ This monograph will

³ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 18.

⁴ Senge, 21.

use case studies to show that the U.S. tends to avoid unconventional long-term solutions in favor of conventional options that may produce satisfactory results now, but not address the root causes of the problem.

“The Delusion of Learning from Experience”. According to Senge, people learn best from experience, yet they never directly experience the consequences of many of their most important decisions.⁵ The most critical decisions made in organizations have system-wide consequences that stretch over years or decades. United States. military history will show if the consequences of decisions at the strategic and operational levels contributed to the discontinuity of command and control of unconventional warfare from one conflict to the next.

“The Myth of the Management Team”. Senge describes the management team as a collection of savvy, experienced managers who represent the organization’s different functions and areas of expertise.⁶ All too often, management teams tend to spend their time fighting for turf, avoiding anything that will make them look bad personally, and pretending that everyone is behind the team’s collective strategy – maintaining the *appearance* of a cohesive team. If these characteristics match the pattern of our military Services, this study will be able to establish if the lack of continuity in unconventional warfare command and control is based on Service and branch parochialism.

Using these three criteria, this monograph will establish a pattern to determine whether or not there is a continuity gap in SOF’s ability to command and control joint unconventional warfare at the operational level of war. Based on the analysis, the study will draw conclusions and make recommendations dependent upon the outcome of the research on unconventional warfare command and control.

⁵ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 23.

⁶ Senge, 24.

The purpose of this study is to determine the organizational structure needed to overcome or mitigate the continuity gap in command and control for unconventional warfare at the operational level. It is not an examination of Unconventional Warfare theory, a critique of Unconventional Warfare campaign planning, or how we currently conduct joint Unconventional Warfare doctrine and training, nor will it attempt to identify the resources required in manpower and material to conduct joint unconventional warfare.

Addressing the continuity gap in our ability to plan, organize, and lead unconventional warfare at the operational level will help overcome gaps in our ability to prosecute unconventional warfare independently and in concert with conventional forces and interagency partners. Creating a joint unconventional warfare command and control structure at the operational level of war will leverage the capabilities of the nation's military manpower and resources.

CHAPTER TWO

Case Studies in Unconventional Warfare

“There are few Generals that has run oftener, or more lustily as I have done...But I have taken care not to run too far and commonly have run as fast forward as backward, to convince our enemy that we were like a crab, that could run either way.”⁷

General Nathanael Greene, Continental Army

Our Roots in Unconventional Warfare: The American Revolution

As the world’s only remaining superpower, it is hard to imagine that our origins were birthed out of the auspices of unconventional warfare. George Washington and the Continental Army were rarely successful when they met opposing British forces in a direct approach. In order for the Revolution to survive, Washington had to incorporate UW into his strategy. The Continental Army combined a war of movement and complementary irregular operations. The simultaneous application of a conventional main force and an irregular militia force produced a powerful balancing effect that complicated the strategic response by the British. The Americans’ tactics inflicted strategic defeat on what appeared to be an overwhelmingly superior adversary.

The American Revolution marked the advent of fortified compound warfare.⁸ Modern compound warfare is the systematic, deliberate combining of regular and irregular forces. In the “fortified” form of modern compound warfare, the main force is shielded from destruction by means of a safe haven and a major power ally.⁹ The newly formed United States of America used the fortified compound warfare model to wage protracted warfare and defeat a militarily superior British force to gain their independence. The Continental Army used fortified compound

⁷ One hundred and fifty years later Mao Zedong echoed Greene’s tactics, ‘enemy advances, we retreat; enemy halts, we harass; enemy tires, we attack; enemy retreats, we pursue.’ Geoffrey Parker, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 190.

⁸ Thomas M. Huber, *Napoleon in Spain and Naples: Fortified Compound Warfare*. [Online] Available. www-cgsc.army.mil/CSI/research/comwar/comwarhuber.asp, 8/28/2003, 1.

⁹ Huber, *Napoleon in Spain and Naples* 1.

warfare to achieve victory against the British by possessing a conventional force, an unconventional force, a safe haven, and a major power ally. These four elements are the essence of fortified compound warfare.¹⁰ U.S. warfare tradition was born of an unconventional nature, and that same unconventional warfare tradition has been applied in varying degrees over the course of U.S. history.

The conventional forces in the war for American independence were the Continental Army, the fledgling American Navy, and the French Navy. The Continental Army conducted a war of movement against the British forces and faced them in set piece battles when required. By conducting unconventional warfare in concert with conventional warfare, Americans learned how to achieve victory through leverage rather than might. Unconventional forces, though nearly always disdained to one degree or another by conventional military leaders, were used to complement the war of movement waged by General George Washington and the Continental Army. Combining conventional and unconventional forces forced the British into an exhausting protracted war.¹¹ The primary goal of the Continental Army was to attack and survive. The longer the Continental Army survived, the greater its chance of exhausting the British.

A protracted war also lent the independent American colonies legitimacy. The longer the Continental Army survived, the greater the credibility of the new nation. The U.S.' prolonged survival, in the face of overwhelming odds, encouraged support by a major British political and economic rival seeking to harm Britain's global dominance. After three years of war, America was able to attract an outside sponsor, France, to assist them in defeating the British.

France had a vested interest in the success of the Continental Army and the corresponding success of the American independence movement. Great Britain was a formidable

¹⁰Thomas M. Huber, *Compound Warfare: An Anthology*. [Online] Available www-cgsc.army.mil/CSI/research/ComWar/comwarhuber.asp, 8/28/2003, 1.

¹¹The element of time and protracted nature of UW is interesting and important. Two hundred years later, Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh used protracted warfare to exhaust their opponents. England was fighting a war on the continent of Europe and had other colonies to police. The U.S. was an economy of force effort.

rival of France, spurring French motivation to sponsor the American War for Independence.

France provided financing, resources, and training to bring the Continental Army up to a standard needed to contend with the superior British Army.

Sanctuary was vital to the survival of the Continental Army and the protracted military strategy of the Revolutionary War. An unconventional force, because of its smaller size and makeup, is vulnerable to the actions of a stronger conventional force. Without sanctuary, a conventional force usually is capable of pursuing the unconventional force until it is destroyed or captured.

Sanctuary during the American Revolution was provided by the vast un-colonized interior. With thousands of miles between Great Britain and America, only a limited number of troops could be shipped to the continent to deal with the American insurrection. In the 18th Century, it took months to deploy a battalion of troops. This provided U.S. forces the opportunity to avoid British strength. When necessary, U.S. forces broke contact from the superior British forces in order to refit and recuperate in the mountains, across major rivers, or in marshes – beyond the grasp of British forces.

The Continental Army won the war for American Independence because General Washington understood he needed to leverage what combat power he had by combining unconventional and conventional operations in a complementary manner. There were several guerrilla leaders in the American Revolution. Ethan Allen and Thomas Sumter waged unconventional warfare campaigns, but the most famous of the guerrilla leaders in the American Revolution was Francis Marion, “The Swamp Fox.” Francis Marion provides a classic example of how to use unconventional warfare to lead or work in partnership with a conventional force.

Francis Marion received his military guidance from General Nathanael Greene. Planning unconventional operations and relying on irregular forces was born out of necessity rather than of

a systemic or deliberate nature.¹² Many times during the war, the number of Continental troops was inadequate for carrying on what was regarded as a proper campaign. General Greene frequently had to fill out his forces with militiamen.¹³ In organizing the forces, there was no attempt to adjust conventional tactics to accommodate the abilities of the militia. Francis Marion's militia conducted their operations in support of the Continental Southern Army under Greene, and complementarily integrated to spread the British force thin by waging war to control the countryside. Nathanael Greene achieved success through the effective integration of militia units into the Southern Army's battle plans to maximize their strengths and minimize their weaknesses.¹⁴ By 1781, Nathanael Greene's Army of the Southern Department had restricted British control south of Virginia to areas around the ports of Wilmington, N.C., Charleston, and Savannah.¹⁵

Marion conducted unconventional warfare operations in the vicinity of the Pee Dee and Santee Rivers. Marion's forces found shelter in the bogs and swamps around these rivers. By unconventional means, Marion maneuvered his brigade to set up ambushes in advance of British columns moving along lines of communication. Marion ambushed the advance elements of the columns, keeping the numerical advantages in his favor. This threw British columns off kilter, causing intense casualties and forcing the British to change their tactics in the war. The British had to divert more combat forces to secure their lines of communication and supply depots, thus decreasing the available forces to fight General Greene and the Continental Army. Francis Marion and his brigade of unconventional warriors executed guerrilla-type operations in a harmonizing manner to the conventional forces they supported in the Continental Army.

¹²J.D. Morelock, *Washington as Strategist: Compound Warfare in the American Revolution, 1775-1783*. [Online] Available <http://www-cgsc.army.mil/csi/research/ComWar/comwarmorelock.asp> , 4/17/2004, 11.

¹³Morelock, 8.

¹⁴Morelock, 9.

¹⁵ Larry H. Addington, *The Patterns of War Since the 18th Century*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1994), 18.

The Continental Army was able to achieve victory against the British because they possessed the four elements necessary to wage fortified compound warfare: an unconventional force, a conventional force, sanctuary, and a major power ally. The American application of fortified compound warfare against the British demonstrates that unconventional warfare played a vital role in our country's origin. In the centuries to come, as the nation grew, the U.S. would find it necessary to use unconventional warfare as a means of achieving national objectives. History would show that in spite of a tendency to resist unconventional warfare, it would be necessary, time and again, to wage simultaneous conventional and unconventional warfare to achieve our national objectives.

The OSS in The Second World War

Nearly a century and a half later, the U.S. found itself on the other side of the coin regarding unconventional warfare. The country had grown into a global industrial power, and the military reflected that strength. The U.S. military had all but forgotten its roots in unconventional warfare. In 150 years, its doctrine and capabilities evolved into a traditional conventional military force.

At the outbreak of the Second World War (WWII), the need for an organization to conduct unconventional warfare became apparent. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was chartered to conduct unconventional operations in the European and Pacific theaters.¹⁶ The OSS used unconventional operations to assist the French Resistance in Europe and supported Chiang Kai-Shek and Mao Zedong in China.

¹⁶ Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-05. *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*. December 2003, I - 3.

The Jedburghs

Specific unconventional operations in Europe involved the Jedburgh Teams. Jedburghs were volunteers specially trained to conduct guerrilla warfare in conjunction with the French Resistance to support the Allied invasion of France.¹⁷ The Jedburgh Teams were infiltrated throughout southern France prior to the Allied invasion. These small unconventional warfare teams assisted the French Resistance in harassment and interdiction operations and sabotage. After the Allies invaded occupied France, the OSS conducted additional unconventional operations prior to Operation Market Garden. The U.S. created and resourced a robust and efficient command and control structure in Scotland to ensure the teams were supported with communications and resources.

The OSS concept of conducting unconventional warfare in Europe and Asia had developed into an efficient organization of around 13,000 people, including all four military Services and civilians, incorporating myriad capabilities to include special operations units, morale operations units (Psychological Operations), maritime units, field experimental units and research and development.¹⁸(See Figure 1.)

Integrating OSS command and control into conventional operations was disjointed and decentralized. Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) created a Special Forces (SF) detachment, consisting of a small staff and a signal detachment for each field army and army group headquarters to coordinate unconventional warfare operations with the field army.¹⁹ The SF detachment was an orthodox military staff organized to provide the commanding general of the Field Army a direct means to exercise control over the organized resistance elements and to use these elements in connection with military operations. The detachments,

¹⁷ S. J. Lewis, *Jedburgh Team Operations in Support of the 12th Army Group, August 1944*: (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1991), 1.

¹⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, *The Office of Strategic Services: America's First Intelligence Agency*, [Online] Available <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/oss/art03.htm>, 4/11/2004, .3.

¹⁹ Lewis, 6.

however, had no means of directly contacting those organized resistance groups and Jedburgh Teams other than through SFHQ, the OSS Headquarters at Milton Hall, Scotland.

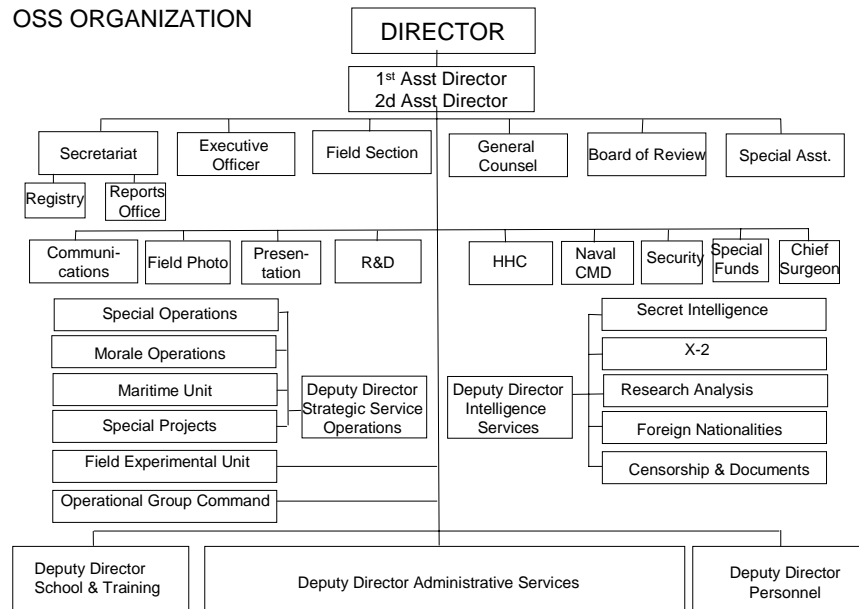


Figure 1

The effectiveness of OSS' ability to plan, organize, and lead unconventional warfare relied on emerging technologies. The OSS relied on two relatively new technologies to maintain command and control. The aircraft of the era needed for Jedburgh Team resupply had too short a range and too small a payload capacity to extend OSS operational reach beyond France. The arcane shortwave radios of the period were fragile, and in many cases did not survive the impact of the parachute drop into occupied France. When the radios did work, the SFHQ message centers were receiving so much traffic that it became impossible to analyze, act upon, and disseminate information.²⁰ SFHQ continually faced the challenge of receiving and analyzing large amounts of radio traffic and giving the SF detachments at the Field Army level sufficient information to act upon.²¹ A real problem existed in the inability of the ground force

²⁰ Lewis, *Jedburgh Team Operations*, .62.

²¹ Lewis, 14.

headquarters to effectively communicate with the Jedburgh Teams.²² Technologically, the OSS concept was ahead of its time.

The OSS also conducted operations in the China-Burma-India Theater. Detachment 101 conducted unconventional warfare activities primarily in China and Indochina. These activities helped bolster alliances with Chiang Kai-Shek, Mao Zedong, and Ho Chi Minh, who were all leading guerrilla forces in the fight against the Japanese in the Pacific.²³

While the OSS continued unconventional operations in conjunction with major operations throughout Europe and the Pacific, it gained valuable experience integrating the different Services and indigenous force capabilities, adjusting tactics, techniques, and procedures and doctrine to meet local challenges, and planning and organizing activities appropriate to each theater and specific operation. OSS planners and leaders became experts at command and control of UW. But at the end of the war, the OSS was disbanded and the institutional expertise and memory were lost.

When the OSS was abolished in 1946, it never reorganized as an institution.²⁴ Later, the intelligence side of what had been the OSS grew into the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Unconventional warfare slipped into history as a footnote to the conventional campaigns of WWII.

Unconventional Warfare Operations in Korea

The Korean Conflict began in 1950 when North Korean forces attacked across the demarcation line dividing North and South Korea. This came as a shock to the United States, which just five years earlier had fought the Second World War. Because of the demobilization in

²²Lewis, *Jedburgh Team Operations*, .63.

²⁴ John K. Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty: An American Soldier in the 20th Century*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 65-66.

1945, the U.S. was ill-prepared to fight the Korean Conflict. Although the conventional conflict is well documented, little has been written on the unconventional warfare campaign in Korea.

Similar to the conventional side of the war, the performance of unconventional American units appeared to have lost all the valuable lessons they had learned in World War II. The OSS had been disbanded four years previously and there was no proponent agency to take its place. Also, the qualified officers and NCOs who had served in the OSS were returned to conventional units or separated from the service.²⁵ The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was fully established and running, but was a civilian organization that concentrated on intelligence collection. The CIA did not have the expertise or personnel to run unconventional operations. There was no unit or organization within the army to do in Korea what the OSS had done during World War II and what Special Forces would later do in Vietnam.

Once the U.S. and the U.N. committed to the defense of South Korea, the military had to mobilize and recreate the institutions it had disbanded in 1945. Planners and leaders with the unconventional warfare mission in Korea also had to start from scratch.

While much of the Army's unconventional warfare structure was gone, a few of the resources necessary for guerrilla operations were available. A smattering of units capable of waging unconventional warfare were organized to replace capabilities lost only five years earlier. For example, the 1st Raider Company, also known as the 8227th Army Unit, was created to replace the Alamo Scouts, and organized under Far East Command under the authority of General Douglas MacArthur.²⁶ The CIA's Special Missions Group inserted guerrillas across the North

²⁵ Ben S. Malcolm, *White Tigers: My Secret War in North Korea*. (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1996), xii.

²⁶ United Nations Special Operations in Korea, *GHQ 1ST Raider Company*, [Online] Available <http://www.korean-war.com/ghqraiders.html>, 4/16/2004, 1.

Korean beaches at night to conduct limited reconnaissance missions, establish Escape and Evasion networks, or collect intelligence.²⁷

What the military lacked was the institutional desire and technical expertise to make UW work.²⁸ Despite this shortcoming, two major unconventional warfare organizations were formed during the Korean conflict - the Combined Command for Reconnaissance Activities, Korea (CCRAK), and the Joint Advisory Commission, Korea (JACK).

The CCRAK was a fusion of units from all the military services conducting intelligence collection activities and covert operations. One of the subordinate units of CCRAK was an organization with the obscure title, 8240th Army Unit, a cover name for special operations in North Korea. The mission of the 8240th Army Unit was to organize, train, and equip North Korean partisans for harassment and interdiction raids and ambushes behind North Korean lines. The partisans would also provide intelligence and ensure safe passage for airmen shot down in North Korean territory. In 1952, the partisans were training for a new phase of the war, a major assault by conventional forces northward from the 38th Parallel. Unfortunately, a cease-fire was signed before the offensive was launched and the partisans were subsequently disbanded.

Missing the Mark

Unconventional warfare operations in Korea were a low priority and rarely addressed during campaign planning. In fact, the unconventional warfare operations of the 8240th Army Unit were subordinated to a conventional command. Command and control was handled by the Eighth U.S. Army Headquarters in Taegu.²⁹ The command structure created futile and unnecessary friction for the 8240th. The Eighth Army, a conventional unit, was not designed to

²⁷ Michael E. Haas, *In The Devil's Shadow: UN Special Operations During the Korean War*. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000), 225-229.

²⁸ Malcolm, *White Tigers*, 18.

²⁹ Malcolm, 20.

conduct unconventional warfare operations and had difficulty integrating unconventional warfare into its campaign planning. The Eighth Army also had difficulty organizing, training, or equipping the partisan units because it was not designed for these activities either.

There was also something of a mind-set against the use of any unconventional warfare operations within Eighth Army.³⁰ Therefore, the command and control headquarters charged with oversight of unconventional warfare operations became an impediment to the unit conducting unconventional warfare operations. Despite over 7,000 partisans conducting guerrilla and intelligence operations on the ground behind the lines in North Korea, unconventional operations were hamstrung from the beginning.

CCRAK continually found themselves seeking clear guidance, competing for resources, and conducting redundant operations with other organizations waging the unconventional fight. The U. S. government had decided to step up pressure on the Chinese Communists by using the CIA to support guerrilla movements on the mainland of China, especially along the lines of communication to the Communist Chinese Forces in Korea.³¹ In response to their new unconventional mission, the CIA established the Joint Advisory Commission, Korea (JACK), which was charged with waging partisan warfare in North Korea. JACK's main mission was to collect military intelligence by dispatching Korean agents north, by either parachute or sea insertion from island bases.³²

It was clear early on that not much long-range thinking and planning had been invested in the unconventional fight. During previous experience in the OSS, there was a broad campaign that established a strategic policy for conducting unconventional warfare against the Axis powers. This policy was not only adopted in Europe, it extended to the Pacific Theater as well. The CIA, the agency that replaced the OSS, had no strategic policy or capability to conduct an

³⁰ Malcolm, *White Tigers*, 18.

³¹ Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty*, 181.

³² Singlaub, 182.

unconventional campaign. The Agency's plan to undercut the determination of the Chinese high command through a guerrilla offensive on the mainland was not an established policy.³³ As a fledgling organization, the CIA was not prepared to take on the resource intensive work of conducting a guerrilla warfare campaign. They were, however, clear on what their primary mission was. The CIA had invested their priority into intelligence activities and they learned to do this well. Unfortunately, the operations side of unconventional warfare suffered neglect.

Due to the lack of a campaign plan and virtually no strategic thinking, the JACK was never able to establish a resistance movement in North Korea. Early in the war, American and United Nations forces found themselves retreating rapidly towards the southeast corner of the Korean Peninsula. The invitation to anti-communist refugees to accompany the retreating U.N. forces literally stripped North Korea of any potential resistance networks. This meant that any kind of underground, auxiliary, or guerrilla structure would have to start from scratch, without substantial support from the populace. Agents could not function well without such support. In the Second World War, the best successes had been in Nazi-occupied countries where the bulk of the population chafed under German occupation. There were plenty of anti-communists in Korea; unfortunately, almost every one of them had been invited to live in the South.³⁴

Raising an effective resistance campaign, for either the JACK or CCRAK, was nearly impossible. One of the biggest obstacles JACK faced was the Pentagon's prohibition on American unconventional warfare troops in North Korea. The Pentagon was worried that these Americans might be captured, broken by physical and psychological torture (the new term for this was "brainwashing"), and eventually be used for propaganda purposes.³⁵ Refusing to let U.S. forces infiltrate enemy territory with Korean partisans demonstrated a serious lack of commitment to any North Korean resistance movement by the U.S. or U.N. With JACK's

³³ Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty*, 182.

³⁴ Singlaub, 182.

³⁵ Singlaub, 182.

limitations, CCRAK struggled valiantly to build a resistance movement off the west coast of North Korea. But their resistance did not spread throughout North Korea. The main thrust of CCRAK's operations, therefore, became small-scale sabotage raids, most launched from secret bases on the west coast's scattered islands and isolated peninsulas.³⁶

Waging unconventional warfare in Korea suffered other obstacles as well. Though directed to establish a unit capable of conducting UW, there were two caveats: 1) there would be no additional manpower from the American ranks, and 2) no weapons were available for arming the guerrillas. Also, UW operations in Korea needed air and naval support and this could function only under a joint command. Far East Command headquarters rejected a plan for a combined staff. Instead, UW operations remained under control of the Eighth Army's G-3 (Operations) section. That permitted the Eighth Army to keep close operational control of the partisans. It also kept the partisans from utilizing all the air and naval resources that would have been available under a joint command.³⁷ Later in December of 1951, partisan operations underwent another confusing realignment.

Responsibility for the partisans was shifted to a theater-level agency. Partisan operations were aligned under the operational control of Far East Command Liaison Detachment Korea (FEC L/D (K)), which reported to the Far East Command Liaison Group Korea (FEC L/G(K)), which in turn answered to the Assistant Chief of Staff for G-2 at FEC Headquarters in Tokyo.³⁸ (See Figure 2.) In addition, partisans' operations still reported to CCRAK. The primary problem with this arrangement is that instead of reporting to just one staff level, field commanders

³⁶ Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty*, 183.

³⁷ Malcolm, *White Tigers*, 22.

³⁸ Malcolm, 27.

working with the partisans now had to report to two.

Organization of Guerrilla Section, FEC L/D(K), December 1951

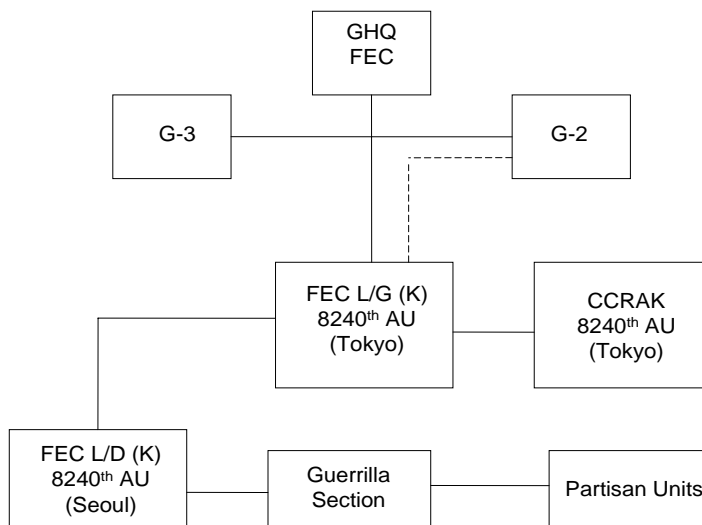


Figure 2

Opportunities Lost

The CCRAK's work overlapped that of the JACK. Their biggest operation was in Hwanghae Province, along the coast northwest of Seoul, where the battle lines divided a traditionally united population of fishing villages. The people had established armed resistance to Kim Il-Sung's Communist regime even before the North Korean invasion of June 1950.³⁹ The U.S. exploited this partisan resistance potential by pouring in advisors, arms, and equipment. Due to operational shortcomings in planning, organizing, and leading UW operations, however, the resistance never spread elsewhere in North Korea.

Because of a lack of strategic vision of what the unconventional warfare campaign was capable of achieving, clear command and control issues between CCRAK and JACK remained unresolved throughout the war and their operations were often redundant rather than complementary. Lack of coordination between the Central Intelligence Agency and the Army meant that precious personnel, funding, air support, and other resources were consumed needlessly, while sensitive work was duplicated.

³⁹ Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty*, 182.

Both JACK and CCRAK were disbanded at the end of the Korean Conflict, once again leaving the U.S. with essentially no organization able to plan, organize, or lead UW in the then foreseeable future. The U.S. Army created an awkward and top-heavy organization with no clear lines of command and control and no clear mission statement to oversee the partisans.⁴⁰ It was an ineffective organization. The lack of understanding about the true role of partisans in a major conflict and the dislike for unconventional warfare that permeated the Army at that time prevented the partisans from being used to their maximum effectiveness.⁴¹

Unconventional Warfare Operations in Vietnam

Special Forces were conducting unconventional warfare in Indochina long before we committed conventional forces to Southeast Asia. As early as the late-1950s, Army Special Forces in Operation White Star, task organized under the Central Intelligence Agency, were planning, organizing, and leading UW operations against the Pathet Lao in Laos.⁴² As the struggle to contain communism intensified in South Vietnam, Special Forces again were task organized under the CIA to support the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG). Their mission was to help pacify the provinces in the interior of Vietnam. The Mobile Strike Force or “Mike Force” was a reaction force concept that grew out of the CIDG program, led by U.S. Special Forces (USSF). A joint service unconventional warfare task force, the Studies and Observations Group, was also established to plan, organize, and lead UW operations to interdict forces along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. With many U.S. UW organizations active on the ground, unconventional warfare in Vietnam demonstrated more activity and visibility than seen in the Korean Conflict a

⁴⁰ Malcolm, *White Tigers*, 193.

⁴¹ Malcolm, 193.

⁴² Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*. (Baltimore, MD: John’s Hopkins University Press, 1986), 69.

decade earlier. Still, there was no centralized structure to command and control unconventional warfare operations throughout Vietnam.

The heart of most SF efforts in Vietnam was the Civilian Irregular Defense Group program. The CIDG were indigenous civilian employees of the U.S. Army, recruited, trained, and equipped by USSF. Special Forces established village defense and local security forces for over 200 villages in South Vietnam. The program expanded by the end of 1963 to over 18,000 CIDG forces and 43,000 hamlet militias.⁴³ While working with the CIA, the Army's Special Forces effectively emphasized pacification and population security operations. However, once CIA control over the CIDG program was terminated, MACV quickly oriented them to an ineffective border surveillance and control program, against an enemy that was receiving its support from within South Vietnam.⁴⁴

The "Mike Force" concept grew out of a need for SF to have a reaction force under its own control to reinforce camps that were under attack or siege.⁴⁵ In late 1967, a B-Team, or SF company headquarters, was assigned to each Mike Force. The Mobile Strike Forces were battalion-sized elements of CIDG, four operating in each of the corps headquarters, while the fifth was controlled by 5th Special Forces Group (5th SFG), to be launched anywhere in the country to provide flexibility.⁴⁶

The nature of the mission for the Studies and Observations Group was unconventional warfare. The SOG's primary mission was interdiction operations along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The purpose of SOG's raids was to "make it clear to the leaders of the North that they would

⁴³ Gordon Rottman and Ron Volstad, *United States Army Special Forces 1952-84*. (Great Britain: Reed International Books, Ltd.), 12.

⁴⁴ Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*. 75.

⁴⁵ Rottman and Volstad, 14.

⁴⁶ Rottman, and Volstad, 15.

suffer serious reprisals for their continuing support of the insurgency in South Vietnam.”⁴⁷ They conducted these operations using surrogate forces, including Montagnards and Nungs, ethnic Chinese hill people.⁴⁸ By disrupting the trail of supplies being pushed south by the North Vietnamese government, Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MAC-V) hoped to undermine the efforts of the North Vietnamese in South Vietnam.

There were limitations to the scope and magnitude of the operations SOG could conduct. Part of the problem was the frantic nature in which SOG headquarters was created and integrated into the command and control structure in Vietnam. Then Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, was pressuring the senior Army staff to establish an unconventional warfare capability to counter and undermine the activities of North Vietnam. The first Chief of SOG, Colonel Clyde Russell, fashioned SOG into the same structure as the OSS, with air and maritime sections because these were the ways the agents were transported, plus a psychological operations section similar to the OSS Morale Operations Division.⁴⁹ Nearby was another office which provided specialized logistics aid to SOG and Special Forces, run by the Counterinsurgency Support Office. The CIA contributed a C-123 transport squadron from Taiwan, known as the First Flight Detachment.⁵⁰

As a joint service unit, SOG was unique in that it had its own aviation unit, the 20th Special Operations Squadron (20th SOS) from the U.S. Air Force, whose helicopter crews lived with the men they supported in SOG.⁵¹ The 20th SOS, nicknamed the “Green Hornets”, flew UH-1F Hueys in support of the SOG teams, either as lift birds for infiltration and exfiltration or as

⁴⁷ John L. Plaster, *SOG: The Secret Wars of America's Commandos in Vietnam*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 23.

⁴⁸ Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty*, 293.

⁴⁹ Plaster, 24

⁵⁰ Plaster. 24

⁵¹ Plaster, 109.

gunships in support of UW operations on the ground. SOG had built an effective air capability into its command and control structure. With habitual relationships between pilots and SOG reconnaissance teams, SOG's self sufficiency enhanced their internal command and control structure. This was one of the high points in command and control for SOF.

U.S. Army Special Forces Vietnam, or USASFV, was formed in September of 1962 to control all SF elements in country in support of the CIA.⁵² In September 1964 USASFV was disbanded and the 5th SFG(A) was relocated to Vietnam to handle the expansion of the CIDG program under Operation Switchback.⁵³ Operational control of Special Forces "A" Detachments and "B" Detachments was transferred to the MACV corps senior advisor in each tactical zone.⁵⁴ Transferring control of USSF to MACV marked a major shift in command and control of unconventional warfare operations. Special Forces were now working for MACV advisors whose background in insurgency warfare was generally poor and whose motivation to utilize Special Forces and their CIDG strike forces in support of conventional operations was not compelling.⁵⁵

U.S. Forces began returning to the U.S. in 1970. The Mike Force units were converted into Border Rangers under the Vietnamization program. CIDG operations were terminated in December of 1970, and 5th SFG returned to the States. SOG was inactivated in April of 1972.⁵⁶ The UW organization in Vietnam was effectively dismantled, continuing the cycle of creating and disbanding command and control structures for UW. The similar fragmented command and control of UW as was seen in Korea continued in Vietnam. Under MACV, CIDG UW forces were working in support of the separate corps tactical zones, while 5th Special Forces Group

⁵² Rottman and Volstad, *United States Army Special Forces 1952-84*. 13.

⁵³ Rottman and Volstad, 14.

⁵⁴ Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*,. 74.

⁵⁵ Krepinevich, 74

⁵⁶ Rottman and Volstad, 17.

provided the mobile reserve. Meanwhile, SOG was also working in support of MACV.

Occasionally, CIDG teams under Mike Force supported SOG operations, but there was no centralized UW command and control structure to plan, organize, or lead UW operations in a coordinated counterinsurgency fight or as an adjunct to conventional operations.

Operation Enduring Freedom

In the wake of the 11 September terrorist attacks, the Bush administration was under pressure to respond quickly and effectively. To achieve rapid results in an environment ill suited to conventional military operations, the administration resorted to an unconventional option.

An unconventional warfare task organization was created consisting of paramilitary agents from the CIA and units from 5th Special Forces Group.⁵⁷ The lineage of these two organizations can be traced back to the OSS in WWII. Just as was seen prior to WWII, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War, previous operational level command and control structures for unconventional warfare had been disbanded and the U.S. had to start again from scratch. Unconventional warfare forces existed under the CIA Paramilitary Branch and the Special Forces Groups, but no formal integrated command and control structure was in place to plan, organize, and lead an unconventional warfare campaign at the operational level. Hence, there was no campaign plan available for UW operations in Afghanistan.

Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) North was established to conduct unconventional warfare operations in Afghanistan. The 5th Special Forces Group was given the lead in conducting unconventional warfare, linking up with resistance fighters in the Northern and Eastern Alliances and the Pashtuns to use as surrogates to overthrow the Taliban regime and destroy Al Qaida.⁵⁸ Despite the ad hoc nature of unconventional warfare conducted by JSOTF North, the special operators from 5th SFG met with resounding success in Operation Enduring

⁵⁷ Woodward, Bob. *Bush at War*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 50-51.

⁵⁸ Tanner, Stephen *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban*. (New York: De Capro Press, 2002), 304.

Freedom, infiltrating Afghanistan as early as mid-October 2001, and overthrowing the Taliban regime by the end of December. Results of this magnitude seemed near impossible after the ten year debacle the Soviets suffered in Afghanistan a decade earlier.

Still, the United States military was ill-prepared to conduct unconventional warfare at the operational level. There was no command and control structure in place to address unconventional warfare and there were some hard lessons learned on the fly that may have been avoided had some sort of structure existed to plan and organize a UW campaign. Despite the early success of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), the U.S. was not able to achieve the maximum effective results possible during its unconventional warfare campaign because CENTCOM gave a tactical level headquarters, 5th Special Forces Group, responsibility to serve as an operational level command and control node.

The 5th SFG achieved remarkable tactical results in a short period of time while acting as the JSOTF Headquarters. Adapting to accommodate all the resources thrust upon the Group headquarters, and without a UW campaign plan in place to guide the headquarters, UW operations in OEF achieved effective, but not optimal, results.

The absence of a standing UW command and control structure at the operational level forced 5th SFG to transform itself into a joint command and control structure in a short amount of time. In the course of learning how to become an operational headquarters, 5th SFG continued the generative learning cycle demonstrated by SOF in Korea and Vietnam. JSOTF-North executed a limited number of parallel operations relying on surrogate forces. Despite the best intentions and dedication of the planners, following the battle of Tora Bora many of the Taliban and Al-Qaida belligerents were able to escape across the Afghan-Pakistani border to sanctuary. Different planning based on experience with UW and UW planning processes may have yielded different results.

Another planning shortfall caused by the absence of a trained and experienced command and control structure was Special Operations Command Central's (SOCCENT's) failure to

address the transition from combat operations to post conflict stability and support operations. As a result, the JSOTF Commander and staff were given no clear guidance about what termination or the post-conflict scenario should look like.⁵⁹ Post conflict resolution is critical to conducting and concluding the war.

Senge's Learning Deficiencies and UW

In chapter Three, we will use Senge's Learning Deficiencies as a methodology to answer the research question: How can the U.S. solve the continuity gap in SOF's ability to command and control joint unconventional warfare at the operational level of war?

⁵⁹ Flavin, William F., "Planning for Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Success." *Parameters*, (August 2003): 101.

CHAPTER THREE

Unconventional Warfare and Organizational Learning Disabilities – An Analysis

“Everything is simple in war, but the simplest thing is difficult.”

Carl von Clausewitz, On War

In the wake of Operation Iraqi Freedom, many in the profession of arms are debating the validity of whether or not U.S. forces across the globe are overextended. Why does the debate ensue when the nation possesses the strongest military force on the planet, both in technical capability and in the quality of its military manpower? When we find our ability to prosecute war successfully is *expected* by our citizens because we have proven time and time again that we can accomplish the mission through our military might, why does the media suggest that the Army’s ability to secure the nation does not lie in our combat power alone? It is because we have come to the realization that though it is important how *strong* our military is, it is of greater importance how *fit* our military is with regard to the nimbleness, speed, and flexibility we must use to root out elusive adversaries.

So, how to transform a strong U.S. military force into a fit military force? Transforming into a fit military force is achieved through balance, continuously using all the tools and resources available to ensure the security of the nation. Strength is a subset of fitness. Fitness is achieved by strength, flexibility, agility (or nimbleness), and speed of action. But in order to figure out how to improve U.S. military fitness, the U.S. military has to find out what is wrong with its organization. Peter M. Senge talks about “survival of the fittest” in Chapter Two of his book *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*.⁶⁰ Senge suggests that in the business world, even the most successful companies are poor learners. They may survive, but

⁶⁰ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 17.

they never live up to their potential.⁶¹ The same could be said of the U.S. military. What is defined as excellence in an organization may only be mediocrity because the organization learns poorly.⁶² Senge explains that how one has been taught to think and interact in organizations creates fundamental learning disabilities. He goes on to say that these disabilities will occur despite the best efforts of bright, committed people. The harder one tries to solve a problem, the worse the results.⁶³

Senge claims that learning disabilities pervade all organizations to some degree.⁶⁴ When examining the Department of Defense for the purpose of this study, it is only to examine DoD's ability to conduct unconventional warfare in support of national security objectives. Integral to DoD's ability to conduct unconventional warfare is its ability to command and control unconventional operations. In order to answer the question, "*How can the U.S. solve the continuity gap in SOF's ability to command and control joint unconventional warfare at the operational level of war?*" three of Senge's seven learning disabilities will be applied. They include, "The Fixation on Events," "The Delusion of Learning from Experience," and "The Myth of the Management Team." By examining these learning disabilities, this study will identify gaps and shortfalls of continuity in unconventional warfare command and control.

"The Fixation on Events"

Broadly as a western society, and more specifically as a military organization, we tend to focus on the immediate crisis at hand. We expect crisis events that take place to be explained by immediate events surrounding the crisis. Seeking out such explanations may distract us from

⁶¹ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 18.

⁶² Senge, 18.

⁶³ Senge, 18.

⁶⁴ Senge, 18.

seeing the longer-term patterns of change that lie behind the events. It is ironic that the primary threats to our survival, both of our organizations and our societies, come not from sudden events, but from slow, gradual processes.⁶⁵ We can derive from our unconventional warfare history specific instances of our fixation on events instead of understanding the broader benefits unconventional warfare lends to our National Military Strategy.

Scramble in Korea

An example of our fixation on events is our inherent habit of rushing into building an unconventional warfare command and control organization intended to produce results over a long term, and then pressuring that organization to immediately produce short term results. Once our nation was committed to Korea, only then did we recognize a need to provide command and control of unconventional warfare at the operational level. The government struggled to get two unconventional warfare structures up and running, CCRAK and JACK. Not only were the two organizations raised independently of each other, they were organized within two different agencies: The CCRAK was organized under Eighth U.S. Army, already fighting the conventional war on the Korean peninsula, and JACK was formed and organized by the Central Intelligence Agency. The hurried, stove-pipe approach to running two unconventional warfare structures created great confusion in overlapping geographical responsibilities, redundancy of effort, and the partitioning of precious resources between the two organizations.

The fixation on events kept us from having a capability to plan, organize, and lead unconventional warfare operations until the war was already underway. As a result, UW operations in North Korea achieved only minimal success.

⁶⁵ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 22.

Enduring Freedom

Over half a century later, the terrorist attacks of 11 September again found us scrambling to construct a command and control structure to wage unconventional warfare in Afghanistan against Al Qaida and the Taliban. The nature of the tragedy pushed the Bush administration to act immediately. Because the operational reach and approach was so difficult for conventional forces, unconventional forces were directed to plan and prosecute the war. The U.S. was only marginally prepared to do so at the operational level. The U.S. Army did possess an unconventional warfare force in its Special Forces Groups – tactical level organizations. At the operational level of war, though, the ability to plan, organize, and lead a UW campaign was lacking.

The 5th SFG was tasked with forming the nucleus of JSOTF-North, and served as the command and control headquarters for UW operations in Afghanistan. JSOTF-North took on the task of planning and waging a condensed unconventional warfare campaign. They were able to achieve their desired goals in very few weeks because there was already a developed and mature war of movement being conducted against the Taliban by the Northern Alliance and Eastern Alliance. Had there been no indigenous opposition forces, an unconventional warfare campaign would have taken months or years to develop and execute. This UW campaign was successful in spite of the events which preceded a few years prior.

After the Cold War was over, much of the military turned to peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Based on our experience in Desert Storm, we fixated on the fact that the only way to wage war was with overwhelming combat power. The U.S. saw no need to be conducting unconventional warfare operations in rogue or failed nation states across the globe. The national security structure failed to perceive the threat that rogue and failed states offered. After the 11 September tragedy, we immediately shifted attention to unconventional warfare. The U.S. military demanded immediate results from an unconventional warfare campaign. Because there was a mature guerrilla force ready and willing to conduct operations, SOF was able to meet these

demands, overthrowing the Taliban regime and reducing the Al Qaida threat for a time. We were fortunate.

Fixating on events distracts us from seeing the longer term patterns of change that lie behind the events and from understanding the cause of those patterns.⁶⁶ Both the Korean Conflict and the War on Terror were unexpected. The U.S. was unprepared to deal with the problem in both cases because we were fixated on priorities other than unconventional warfare. As such, unconventional warfare operations barely got off the ground in Korea. In Operation Enduring Freedom, we waged an effective unconventional warfare fight, but we were fortunate to have a guerrilla force primed and ready. Had the guerrillas not been there, the UW campaign would have taken much longer. We cannot learn how to effectively conduct unconventional warfare command and control as an organization if we continue to focus our priorities on short term events. To wage unconventional warfare, a command and control structure must be emplaced to mitigate the cyclic nature of organizational creation and disbanding.

“The Delusion of Learning from Experience”

According to Senge, people learn best from experience, yet they never directly experience the consequences of many of their most important decisions. The most critical decisions made in organizations have system-wide consequences that stretch over years, or decades. All too often, as a military organization we have found ourselves making decisions to restructure our forces immediately after the cessation of hostilities. The same can be said of the unconventional warfare structure. The reason the military disbands its unconventional warfare apparatus after every major conflict is that the military is a victim of the core learning dilemma that confronts all learning organizations, not experiencing, and thus not learning from, the consequences of important decisions. We can find examples of this in the decision to disband the

⁶⁶ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 21.

OSS after the Second World War and the choice to treat unconventional warfare as a temporary situation, unique to a specific conflict.

The United States had the luxury of watching the Second World War develop for two years before the country became decisively involved. As such, a need was identified to be able to wage unconventional warfare in conjunction with conventional operations in both the Atlantic and the Pacific theaters of the war. A combat veteran and Medal of Honor winner from the First World War, William “Wild Bill” Donovan was charged with forming the OSS as an unconventional warfare organization, modeled on the British Strategic Operations Executive (SOE).⁶⁷ Despite the rudimentary command and control apparatus designed for Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF), designated Special Forces Headquarters (SFHQ),⁶⁸ the OSS was able to conduct an effective unconventional warfare campaign in Europe. The OSS also found success in the China – Burma – India Theater with Detachment 101.

Upon cessation of hostilities in Europe and the Pacific, however, the need for unconventional warfare was considered negligible, and the OSS was disbanded. Failing to learn from our experience in the Second World War, disbanding the OSS eliminated the U.S.’ ability to effectively shape the Far East and Southeast Asia in a manner complementary to U.S. foreign policy. Within twenty years we found ourselves embroiled in a controversial war in Southeast Asia, and we are still dealing with the formidable Chinese communist threat today. We are dealing with this issue because we failed to learn from our experience: there is a continuous need for our capability to conduct unconventional warfare, and thus a need for a command and control structure to plan, organize, and lead those operations. The second and third order effects of dealing with a communist China, and committing to a controversial war in Southeast Asia were consequences of our inability to maintain the effective UW command and control capability we possessed in the OSS at the end of WWII.

⁶⁷ Lewis, *Jedburgh Team Operations*, 3.

⁶⁸ Lewis, 3.

Ever since we disbanded the OSS after WWII, we have continued to treat unconventional warfare as a temporary requirement based on a current threat. At the eruption of the Korean conflict, we were unprepared to conduct unconventional warfare, and we scrambled to plug the gap. As we built up forces in South Vietnam, we scrambled to establish the Studies and Observations Group to conduct UW. Prior to OEF, there was no unconventional warfare command and control apparatus to plan, organize, and lead UW operations in Afghanistan. The military has reinvented the wheel every time the need to conduct unconventional warfare arises. As such, the consequences of our decisions at the strategic and operational level have contributed to the discontinuity of command and control of unconventional warfare from one conflict to the next. The military has failed to learn from our experiences of unconventional warfare in the past.

“The Myth of the Management Team”

Time and time again, the U.S. has focused on conventional warfare to satisfy the requirements of the National Military Strategy. Unconventional warfare has fallen victim to parochialism, as a consequence of conflict in the Department of Defense “management team”.⁶⁹ Every time we have decided to organize a command and control structure to wage unconventional warfare, that command and control structure has had to fight for the resources required to wage an effective UW campaign. This stems from a pattern of organizational behavior where the U.S. generates a UW command and control structure using decentralized planning and decentralized execution.

The result is that management teams tend to spend their time fighting for turf, avoiding anything that will make them look bad personally, and pretending that everyone is behind the team’s collective strategy, maintaining the *appearance* of a cohesive team.⁷⁰ To keep the image,

⁶⁹ “Management Team”: The collection of savvy, experienced managers who represent the organization’s different functions and areas of expertise. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 24.

they seek to squelch disagreement. People with serious reservations avoid stating them publicly, and joint decisions are watered-down compromises reflecting a position everyone can live with.⁷¹

This appearance can be found in the organization of the Jedburgh Teams in World War II.

Though the unconventional nature of their operations appeared to be regarded as a high priority, the Jedburghs were left with a hollow command and control structure and not enough manpower and resources to effectively conduct operations. In fact, the OSS had to rely on the British SOE in order to ensure they could sustain their special operations in occupied France. Shortfalls in manpower and equipment affected the effectiveness and impact of Jedburgh Team operations.

The same case could be made in the Korean Conflict. Without much forethought, both CCRAK and JACK were formed to conduct unconventional warfare in North Korea. The redundancy of effort between the two unconventional warfare organizations forced them to compete for resources, even though they were conducting similar unconventional warfare tasks.

Our ability to conduct unconventional warfare today has improved, but we still find our management team lacking the focus they need to solve the complex issues, such as waging guerrilla warfare. Conventional warfare is precise. Commanders and planners know and understand the assets they are dealing with. As such, there is a measure of predictability in conventional operations, facilitated by synchronization matrices and analyzing relative combat power. These are routine issues.

Unconventional warfare is not as tidy as conventional warfare. There are many unknown factors involved in working with surrogate forces. As such, the tempos of future operations will more than likely be controlled by the will, level of resolve, and idiosyncrasies of a guerrilla force

⁷⁰ Senge, 24.

⁷¹ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 24.

commander, rather than an orderly synchronization matrix. Unconventional warfare issues are far from routine. In fact, Dr. Max Manwaring characterizes them as “uncomfortable wars.”⁷²

Thus lies the problem of dealing with the myth of the management team. The team might function quite well with routine issues. But when they confront complex issues that may be threatening, the “teamness” seems to dissolve.⁷³ Therefore, unconventional warfare takes a back seat to more traditional, conventional operations.

Overcoming Learning Deficiencies

Learning disabilities were inherent when the OSS organized their special operations teams under separate Army Groups for planning and execution. In Korea, UW capable organizations CCRAK and JACK did not operate under the same command and control node, creating redundancy and underlap in UW operations. Vietnam showed a similar trend, though there were signs of adaptation later in the conflict. The 5th Special Forces Group was supporting the CIA by planning, organizing, and leading CIDG and “Mike Force” operations in order to pacify the rural populace of South Vietnam, while SOG was conducting cross border UW operations under the control of MACV. Later in the war during Operation Switchback, 5th Group’s operations were brought under the authority and control of MACV. This proved to be ineffective for the CIDG operations, but demonstrated that the military understood the importance of unity of command in UW operations. In order to be an effective UW command and control structure, there must be a focal point for planning, organizing, and leading UW operations. Establishing a focal point for planning, organizing, and leading UW operations is the leverage the military needs to transform from a generative learning organization into an adaptive learning organization.

⁷²Max G. Manwaring, ed., *Uncomfortable Wars: Toward a New Paradigm of Low-Intensity Conflict*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991.)

⁷³Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 25.

We intuitively know the US dismantles its military C2 structure after every war, both conventional and unconventional. This creates a cyclical pattern of creation and *destruction*, and forces the military to be a generative learning organization. The optimum, however, would be to minimize the intensity of the cyclical change and leave some sort of structure in place between major conflicts, enabling the military to be adaptive as an organization. (See Figure 3.) Ideally, the changes in UW command and control structure would stay within the narrow band shown in the graphic.

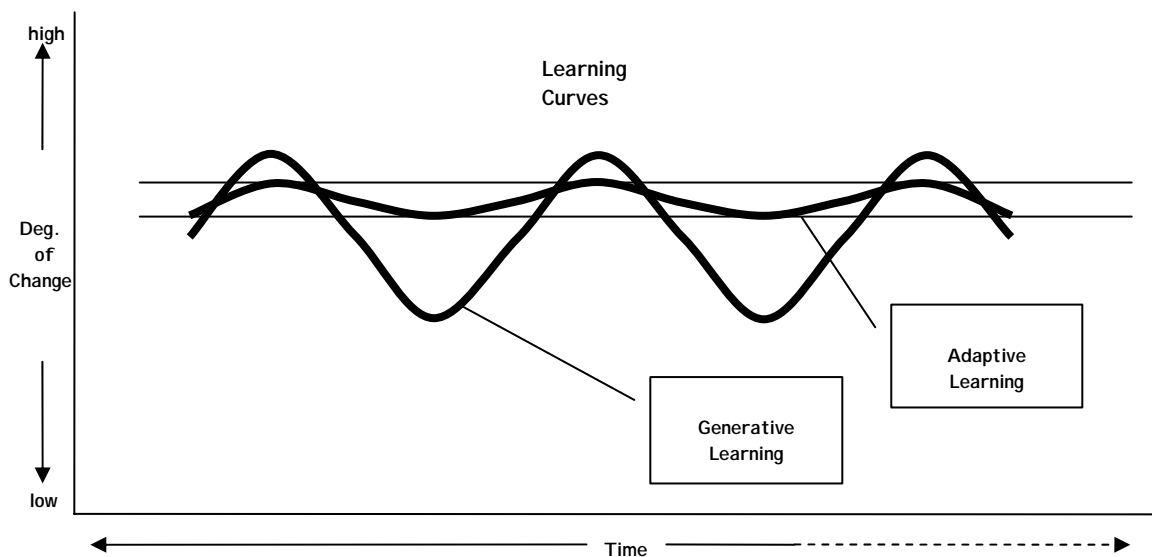


Figure 3

During the 1980's, USSOCOM worked hard to strengthen its ability to command and control Special Operations Forces. The Cohen-Nunn amendment reorganized Special Operations Forces to provide a global command and control structure for special operations forces. Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs: SOCCENT, SOCEUR, SOCPAC, SOCSOUTH, SOCJFCOM) provide a joint SOF planning and command organization to each geographic combatant commander. The TSOCs are capable of conducting special operations campaign planning, they are regionally oriented, and they can tap into the theater logistics structure in order to sustain special operations.

Under the Cohen Nunn amendment, the organization of SOF was centrally focused under USSOCOM. When addressing the priority of special operations core competencies, however, unconventional warfare was regarded as a distant priority in relation to the higher profile missions of direct action, special reconnaissance, or foreign internal defense.

To transform our UW capability from a generative organizational pattern to an adaptive organizational pattern, a focal point must be established to leverage all the capabilities and resources, joint and interagency, required to plan, organize, and lead UW operations. Establishing this focal point will solve the continuity gap at the operational level for unconventional warfare.

Chapter Four will recommend a joint unconventional warfare command and control structure that will meet the requirement to solve the continuity gap in unconventional warfare at the operational level.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusions and Recommendations

“We need a greater ability to deal with guerrilla forces, insurrection, and subversion... We must be ready now to deal with any size force, including small externally supported bands of men; and we must help train local forces to be equally effective.

President John F. Kennedy, Message to Congress, 1961

To build a better organization, capable of waging our unconventional warfare fights, the organization must be established on a firm foundation. To merely reorganize the military command and control structure for unconventional warfare would be limiting the scope of the solution and ignore the nature of the UW environment. Successful, modern UW employs all the elements of national power; diplomatic, informational, military, and economic. What is needed is an integrated organization that brings all these elements of national power to bear at the operational level - a Joint Interagency Task Force for Unconventional Warfare (JIATF-UW). This new organization, a standing interagency command and control headquarters, will have the requisite authority to plan, organize, and lead unconventional warfare operations. They will coordinate, focus, and commit all national agencies to winning the War on Terror.

Establishing a Joint Interagency Task Force for Unconventional Warfare for each geographical combatant command is the starting point in this venture. Even if we establish geographically oriented Joint Interagency Task Forces, we are still treating the War on Terror as only a military problem, albeit with some interagency coordination. A Joint Interagency Task Force Commander needs the ability to compel other government agencies to fully participate in the planning, organizing and resourcing of the JIATF-UW. Just as the commander of a coalition task force among willing military partners has the authority to commit assigned forces to combat, the commander of a JIATF-UW would require the authority to commit resources from participating governmental agencies to action. Without such authority, the effort will be for

naught -- and we will continue to suffer through recreating new command and control structures for unconventional warfare each time a crisis arises.

The National Security Council is charged with managing complex crises through interagency cooperation.⁷⁴ The NSC has the authority to compel interagency cooperation and coordination. The Policy Coordination Committees provide a day-to-day forum for interagency coordination of national security policy, as well as provide policy analysis for other senior committees.⁷⁵ There are six regional Policy Coordination Committees: Western Hemisphere, Europe and Eurasia, Africa, Near East and North Africa, East Asia, and South Asia. There are also 11 functional Policy Coordination Committees: International Development and Humanitarian Assistance, International Finance, Transnational Economic Issues, Trade and Policy Review Group, Records Access and Information Security, Arms Control, Counter-Terrorism and National Preparedness, Global Environment, Defense Strategy Force Structure and Planning, Proliferation Counterproliferation and Homeland Defense, Intelligence and Counterintelligence, and Democracy, Human Rights and International Operations.⁷⁶ The purpose of the Policy Coordination Committees is to force U.S. agencies to collaborate on Presidential directives. Depending upon the issue, a Policy Coordination Committee is designated to take the lead and the other 16 Policy Coordination Committees play supporting roles. The lead Policy Coordination Committee writes a political-military plan to support Presidential Directives. The political-military plan is an executable order that shows the commitment and objectives of all U.S. agencies involved.

Normally, when dealing with a foreign crisis that may involve military action, a regional (geographic) Policy Coordination Committee takes the lead in collaborating with all U.S.

⁷⁴ National Defense University. *Interagency Management of Complex Crisis Operations Handbook*, November, 2003, 1/

⁷⁵ *Interagency Management*, 4.

⁷⁶ *Interagency Management*, 4.

agencies, with appropriate functional Policy Coordination Committees playing supporting collaborative roles.⁷⁷ To effectively command and control joint unconventional warfare effectively at the operational level of war, a Policy Coordination Committee must be established that will be designated to take the lead on unconventional warfare, thus compelling other agencies to assist the standing JIATF-UWs. An NSC Policy Coordination Committee for UW would give JIATF-UW Commanders the authority and resources to plan, organize, and lead unconventional warfare using all the elements of national power. A Policy Coordination Committee for UW would write a Pol-Mil plan to discourage parochialism and promote -- perhaps even force -- cooperation, channeling optimal resources to the unconventional fight and avoiding a fight for resources, as the OSS faced in the Second World War and JACK and CCRAK faced in the Korean Conflict. If created properly, a Policy Coordination Committee for UW would have the authority to overcome the “Myth of the Management Team.”

By establishing a Policy Coordination Committee for Unconventional Warfare and the War on Terror, JIATF-UW commanders will have access to the full range of capabilities needed to fight an unconventional war. Beyond the Department of Defense, agencies that can assist in waging all facets of war include the Department of Justice, the Department of State, the U.S. Information Agency, and the Department of the Treasury. In addition, there are numerous intelligence agencies that can focus their resources on the unconventional fight and facilitate an effective unconventional warfare Pol-Mil plan. These include the Director of Central Intelligence, the National Reconnaissance Office, the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Agency. A collaborative effort between all departments and intelligence agencies will strike a balance between high tech and low-tech assets that will optimally support an unconventional warfare campaign.

⁷⁷ *Interagency Management*, 4.

Establishing a Policy Coordination Committee for Unconventional Warfare is the best way to carry out National Presidential Directives for the War on Terror. It is an effective way to communicate policy and compel adherence. A PCC-UW would clarify agency responsibilities, commit the various agencies to action, and facilitate interagency planning and preparations in a peacetime setting, rather than scrambling to create new, ad hoc organizations after the crisis has begun. A PCC-UW would enable, and even empower, JIATF-UWs to be adaptive learning organizations, making small adjustments to address environmental requirements, and avoiding the need to create whole new structures and processes each time, like generative learning organizations. It would ensure broad interagency coordination and gives sufficient authority to a JIATF-UW commander to wage unconventional warfare.

Effective Unconventional Warfare Command and Control

According to Title 10 of the United States Code, U.S. Special Operations Command has the responsibility for special operations activities, including unconventional warfare. Joint and Service doctrine notes that all special operations forces contribute to unconventional warfare, but that the Special Forces are the primary actors in this core special operations task. In the recent past, both in Afghanistan and Iraq, Special Forces Groups have been tasked to form the nucleus of a JSOTF for unconventional warfare. In both these instances, there was interagency coordination, hinting at the possibilities for a JIATF-UW. (See Figure 4.)

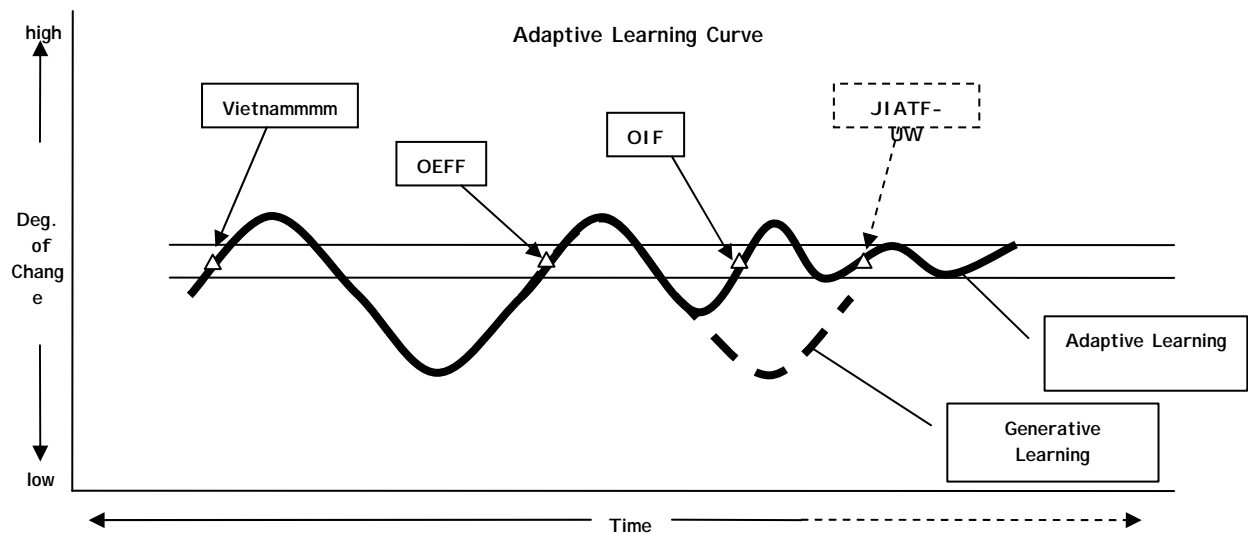


Figure 4

The command and control architecture for a Special Forces Group was designed in the early 1950s when there was little or no emphasis on joint operations, much less interagency integration. Unconventional warfare was planned, organized, and executed from the Special Forces Operating Base (SFOB), the tactical headquarters that a Special Forces Group headquarters morphs into, usually with minimal assistance from joint Service counterparts. Today, all special operations forces integrate under a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) to combine their capabilities to achieve operational success in support of a Joint Force Commander (JFC).

The JSOTF command and control architecture works well for executing the preponderance of special operations. Unconventional warfare is not one of the tasks a JSOTF does well, though, because of the major role played by interagency actors. As we have seen in the unconventional warfare case studies, the tendency has been to cut-and-paste a joint operational command and control apparatus together after the crisis begins. As such, past unconventional warfare campaigns rarely achieved their full potential. Though the JSOTF command and control structure was adequate in most cases, the difficulties of learning how to plan, organize, and lead integrated unconventional warfare could have been avoided if there had been a standing unconventional warfare command and control structure able to adapt to the circumstances of the moment. Having an adaptive JIATF-UW organization requires a constant presence in theater, capable of tapping into all resources available at the joint and interagency levels of government, while maintaining a low signature in the media and in international relations. A standing, fully resourced Joint Interagency Task Force for UW is an innovative and transformational command and control solution to a problem that is unlikely to evaporate anytime soon. It achieves what Senge suggested is necessary for success, an adaptive learning organization with the tools and processes in place to overcome organizational learning disabilities.

Malleable Command and Control

The pace of the changing UW environment will be swift. To achieve the pace of an adaptive learning organization the JIATF-UW must possess malleable C2, capable of transforming as the political-military environment changes. The military aspects of a malleable C2 structure will be enabled by the modular concept for units envisioned in the Army Transformation concept.

Four JIATF-UWs would be established, one to accommodate each geographic combatant command: Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), European Command (EUCOM), Central Command (CENTCOM), and Pacific Command (PACOM). Though each of these JIATF-UWs will serve the same purpose, each task organization will be uniquely based on the geographical environment in which each JIATF-UW will operate. The size of the task force will also vary based on the level of UW activity expected by the PCC in the UW Pol-Mil plan. The JIATF-UW organization will demonstrate malleable command and control, capable of growing or shrinking a force capability based on the political and military requirements of the UW campaign.

A JIATF-UW may be required to command and control a Special Forces Battalion conducting UW in order to facilitate a regime change in a rogue state. Or indirectly, the JIATF-UW may command and control a Special Forces Company to train insurgents against the rogue nation from sanctuary in a neighboring friendly nation state.

In the PACOM AOR with its distinctly maritime flavor, the JIATF-UW will need additional support from Naval Special Warfare Command than would a JIATF-UW in EUCOM or CENTCOM. Coast Guard elements should also be task organized under the JIATF-UW in SOUTHCOM because of the riverine and counter-drug nature of the AOR.

Based on the level of activity in an AOR, there may be a requirement to attach an infantry battalion or Ranger battalion to the UW JIATF to conduct out-of-sector mobile strike missions, or cordon and search missions in support of UW. Regionally oriented, a mechanized infantry battalion or armor battalion may be more appropriate in supporting UW in the open desert of the

Arabian Peninsula and Northern Africa, while a light infantry, Air Assault, or Airborne battalion may be more appropriate in supporting UW in tropically dense and mountainous South America, Sub-Saharan Africa, or Southeast Asia and the Pacific Rim.

Special Operations aviation platforms in Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) and the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (160th SOAR) are treasured assets that are spread thinly across the globe, committed to special operations activities outside the scope of UW. Low-tech aviation capabilities, however, should be incorporated into the JIATF-UWs, tailored to theater requirements. Low-tech aviation capabilities would facilitate the air support of insurgency forces by providing mobility, aerial resupply, surveillance and reconnaissance.⁷⁸ Low-tech aviation can also bring the capability of low-tech gunships, capable of providing protection for U.S. and indigenous forces operating in a non-permissive environment.

A JIATF-UW must demonstrate malleable C2 in order to adapt to the pace of the changing UW environment. A modular construct is required to accommodate the capabilities of all Services and all Agencies committed to the UW campaign. Malleable C2 will facilitate an adaptive learning environment for the JIATF-UW, capable of responding to changes in the political-military environment.

The Focal Point: Interagency is our Future

Keeping the JIATF-UW concept within the confines of the military structure will only limit potential solutions to primarily military alternatives in what is an overwhelmingly non-military environment. The JIATF-UW command structure must have authority that flows from the National Security Council. To demonstrate credible authority to all U.S. agencies committed to the UW Pol-Mil plan, command of the JIATF-UW must be a nominative position from the

⁷⁸Marvin S. Pugmire, *Unconventional Airmen: Present and Future Roles and Missions for 6th SOS Combat Aviation Advisors* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Army War College Press, 10 April 2000.)

UW-PCC. The nomination would be open to all in appropriate U.S. agencies, military or civilian, for leaders with experience waging unconventional warfare. In essence, the JIATF-UW leader may not necessarily be a commander – but the leader will effectively be a *director*.

Having a director in charge of the JIATF-UW will broaden the scope of alternatives available to wage a UW campaign. The JIATF-UW Director could come from any agency that plays a prominent role in waging UW to meet national interests. The State Department, the CIA, and the Department of Defense are prime examples.

The agency representatives within the PCC-UW would present nominations to the NSC Deputies Committee. The PCC-UW would nominate directors based on the director-select's cultural and regional expertise and background in UW. The Deputies Committee would recommend confirming the nomination, with approval from the Principals Committee. With Principal Committee approval, a director is confirmed to lead one of the four standing JIATF-UWs.

The military capabilities task organized under the JIATF-UW will still operate under the control of a military commander. The command position in the JIATF-UW will be dual-hatted. The military commander will be Deputy Director of the JIATF-UW and Commander of UW Forces. The Deputy Director will advise the Director on the most effective way to use the military capabilities attributed to the organization.

Establishing a Director of the JIATF-UW, nominated and approved within the NSC, will facilitate interagency ownership of the UW plan from all committed U.S. agencies. Creating interagency buy-in within the construct of the National Security Council will create an adaptive command and control structure for UW and avoid the generative UW learning organizations of the past. The JIATF-UW can solve the continuity gap in UW command and control.

In Summary: The Path to Discovery

The purpose of this monograph was to answer the question: *How can the U.S. solve the continuity gap in SOF's ability to command and control joint unconventional warfare at the operational level of war?* By examining the facts and assumptions derived from UW history, this study analyzed U.S. case studies in unconventional warfare using the criteria gleaned from Peter Senge's discussion of "learning organizations" in his book *The Fifth Discipline*: "The Fixation of Events," "The Delusion of Learning from Experience," and "The Myth of the Management Team."

This monograph used the criteria to identify and address the continuity gap in unconventional warfare command and control. It explored the feasibility of conducting joint, interagency unconventional warfare at the operational level of war, and suggested a process to bridge the continuity gap in unconventional warfare command and control.

This monograph concluded that in order to plan, organize, and lead UW operations, the U.S. must transform its UW capability from a generative organizational pattern to an adaptive organizational pattern. It also concluded that establishing a focal point within the geographical combatant commands would leverage all joint and interagency capabilities and resources required to plan, organize, and lead UW operations. This focal point provides a solution to the continuity gap at the operational level of war. The standing JIATF-UW concept will solve it. Each of the geographic theaters would have a JIATF-UW to command and control all unconventional warfare actions. The JIATF-UWs would demonstrate malleable command and control by being modular in construct, tailored to the needs of each geographic combatant commander, and adaptable to meet the needs of emerging requirements.

The Policy Coordination Committee for UW will gain the JIATF-UWs access to the full range of capabilities needed to fight an unconventional war. The PCC-UW will carry the authority of the National Security Council to conduct unconventional warfare operations within the construct of a Pol-Mil Plan.

The JIATF-UW should be led by a civilian director, nominated by the PCC-UW and approved within the NSC, to facilitate interagency ownership of the UW plan from all committed U.S. agencies. Having a director in charge of the JIATF-UW will broaden the scope of alternatives available to wage a UW campaign.

Creating regional JIATF-UWs will leverage the capabilities of the nation's military manpower and resources to wage successful unconventional warfare, and offers a solution to the continuity gap in SOF's ability to command and control joint unconventional warfare at the operational level of war.

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